

I will tell you, I am very proud to join with TERRI SEWELL, with Representative JUDY CHU, with Representative LINDA SANCHEZ, and, of course, with Representative JOHN LEWIS, who understands probably more than anyone in this body what discriminatory laws can do to affect a community.

□ 1830

This bill, Mr. Speaker, provides coverage for 13 States upon enactment: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas, Arizona, California, New York, and Virginia. I am a very proud Texan—I love everything about our State—but, unfortunately, we have been at the forefront of discrimination against voters, and Texas is included in this legislation as well. This new geographic formula is based on current conditions and on a 25-year look-back provision.

I hope that we will be able to work together in a bipartisan manner to protect not just some of our voters but to protect every single voter in the United States who would like to cast a ballot. It doesn't matter if a voter is poor and was not able to go and renew his driver's license so that his driver's license may be 61 days expired. It doesn't matter if it is a student whose parents are just putting every little bit of money that they have to get him through college, and, because of that, his only ID is his student identification card, and he would like to use that. We need to be able to make it easier for individuals to vote in our State.

Everybody wants people to be able to lawfully vote, too. We ought to be able to work together in order to pass strong voting rights laws that protect all of our citizens, because we certainly don't want to discourage anyone from voting, and we certainly don't want to look like we are going backwards from where we once were, back in the 1960s.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### IN HONOR OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE ON ITS 107TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALMER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here tonight as a proud member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, known as the NAACP.

I am a member, and I am a life member, and I believe that the NAACP has had a profound impact upon my life. Hence, tonight, I am going to talk about the NAACP as I am also the person who is the sponsor of the original NAACP resolution for 2016. In doing this, I want to praise the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, on this, its 107th anniversary.

This resolution has 24 cosponsors. I thank all of them. I also thank the whip for allowing us this time to talk about the NAACP and to extoll many of its virtues. I thank all of the leadership for the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, this is the 11th time that we have introduced a resolution to honor the NAACP. It is the oldest civil rights organization in the United States of America. We introduced it first in 2006, and it was passed in the House by a voice vote and in the Senate by unanimous consent. When it passed in the House in 2006, it did not do so because of our help alone—"our help" meaning the Congressional Black Caucus. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, who was the chairperson of the Judiciary Committee at the time, was there to help us get this amendment passed. I have talked on the floor about the White side of Black history. Mr. SENSENBRENNER would be a part of that history because, if not for his presence, I assure you we would not have passed this resolution in 2006.

We went on to pass it in 2007, and it passed in the House with a vote of 410-0. In 2008, it passed in the House of Representatives by 403-0; in 2009, by 424-0; in 2010, by 421-0. In 2010, of course, and thereafter, we stopped passing resolutions on the floor of the House; although, we may still present them and talk about them on the floor of the House. So, tonight, this is what we will do.

I would like to mention the mission of the NAACP, which is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons—not just of Black people, not just of people of color, but of all people. The NAACP also desires to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. These are lofty and noble goals because we understand that we have had much racial hatred and much racial discrimination in this country, and the NAACP took it upon itself to eliminate as much of it as possible. It has done a good job, I might add.

Let's look at a little bit of the history of the NAACP.

Back on February 12, 1909, a group of people decided that it was going to do something about the lynchings that were taking place in this country. Literally, in this country, between 1889 and 1918, thousands of African Americans were lynched—thousands. Lynching was done with mob violence. People were taken to trees, and they were lynched. It was done, a good many times, with impunity. No one was ever

prosecuted. It was a grave injustice, and there were people in this country who decided that they were going to do something about this injustice. Among the people who met initially were Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villard, William English Walling, and Ida Wells-Barnett. These persons met and issued a clarion call. Some 60 persons answered that call. Hence, the NAACP was born.

The NAACP did not have its first African American as an executive secretary until 1920. It is important for us to note that many of the Founders of the NAACP—in fact, most of them—were not of African ancestry. The first executive secretaries of the organization were all persons who were of European ancestry. In fact, the first five executive secretaries were White. They were not Black. In 1934, the NAACP had its first Black board chairperson—Louis T. Wright. Dr. Wright became chairperson after the NAACP had had a good number of White chairpersons. So the NAACP has never been and is not now an organization for Blacks only. The NAACP has always stood for an integrated society and has been an integrated organization since its inception.

In 1954, the NAACP, under the leadership and counsel of the Honorable Thurgood Marshall, who became a Justice of the Supreme Court, won the lawsuit of *Brown v. Board of Education*. This was a giant leap forward for us because this lawsuit integrated, to a certain extent, schools throughout the country. The word that was appropriately used at the time was "desegregated." These schools were ordered to be desegregated with all deliberate speed, and all deliberate speed can sometimes take a lot longer than one might expect. A good many years later, there are still those who would contend that we have not fully integrated our school systems across the length and breadth of the country.

In 1955, an NAACP member, the Honorable Rosa Parks, an African American lady, decided that she was going to take a stand, and she took that stand by taking a seat. She took a seat on a bus. In so doing, she ignited a spark that started a civil rights movement. By the way, there are many people who contend that she did this because she was tired. Well, she may have been tired, but she did it because she wanted to take a stand. She was tired of society's relegating her to the back of the bus, and she took a stand against it. Hence, we had the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted more than a year. At the end of that boycott, the bus line—the transportation system—was integrated in Alabama and, of course, later on throughout the country.

An interesting note on this point about the integration and desegregation of bus lines. There was a three-judge panel that actually heard the litigation associated with this transportation issue. On that three-judge panel, there were judges who had a

great debate about this; but there was one Frank M. Johnson, a Federal district court judge, who took the position that we could apply the Brown decision to public transportation. This was the very first time it was done was under the leadership of that three-judge panel and by the Honorable Frank M. Johnson.

Again, I point these things out because it is important to note that there were others who were there with the NAACP to help us along the way. Frank M. Johnson, by the way, was a Republican appointee who was appointed by President Eisenhower, and he went on to help us to integrate schools throughout the South and integrate the Department of Public Safety. He went on to help us with the facilitation of voting rights acts and with the implementation of laws that prohibited persons from discriminating against persons in workplace environments. He really played a significant role as did many other persons who were associated with the NAACP in a vicarious way, because I don't have evidence of his having been a member.

I want to move forward, if I may next, to 2008. I move forward to 2008 because this is when the NAACP supported the passage of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007. There are many unsolved cases in the history of this country with reference to things that happened to African Americans. The NAACP pushed for and supported legislation such that we can have the opportunity to bring some of the dastards to justice who have caused great harm to people who were doing no harm to anyone. The NAACP has fought for this.

In 2009, the NAACP celebrated its centennial anniversary, and the theme at that time was "Bold Dreams and Big Victories"—obviously, a good theme because the NAACP has won many big victories.

In 2012, the NAACP supported the Smart and Safe campaign, which brought attention to the overpopulated prisons and mass incarceration in this country. People who study these issues are well aware that, in this country, we have an overpopulation of persons who are incarcerated. Much of this has to do with mandatory sentencing laws. Much of it has to do with laws that allow persons who are convicted of one type of offense, with drugs, to receive a harsher penalty—cocaine, for example. Then, if you have crack cocaine, you will get a stiffer penalty as opposed to its being some other type of cocaine.

The point is that these harsh sentencing laws have caused a good many people to be incarcerated who, quite frankly, should not be incarcerated for as long as they are incarcerated. Some of these "three strikes and you are out" laws have also caused persons to go to prison for a minor offense because it happened to be the third offense; so the NAACP is fighting against this.

The NAACP wants a just society. The NAACP believes that people who com-

mit crimes ought to be punished, but that they ought to be punished in a fair and just way. Hence, the NAACP has supported trying to do what it can to help us with the overpopulation in prisons due to unjust laws.

The NAACP joined the lawsuit challenging the Texas strict voter ID law. In Texas—and you heard colleagues earlier tonight talk about this—we have one of the most draconian photo ID laws in the country. It is one that requires people who have been voting all of their lives—who have a history of voting, where a person at the polling place knows who you are if you show up to vote—to present a photo ID. The interesting thing about it is, if you vote by mail, you don't have to do this, and most of the fraud that takes place probably takes place by mail because you don't have the same identification process. I find it onerous that we, in Texas, would be subjected to this type of law, and, of course, we are doing what we can to get it properly disposed of. The NAACP is part of the effort to make sure this is done.

□ 1845

In 2014, the NAACP was a leader in the effort to strengthen the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act, as has been explained by colleagues prior to my taking the podium, has had section 4 eviscerated and, as a result, section 5 has been emasculated.

Section 4 was the section of the Voting Rights Act that brought certain places in the country under the purview of the Voting Rights Act. Section 5 is the section, then, that imposes the standards that have to be adhered to. Well, you can't have a strong section 5 if you don't have a section 4 to outline, to specify, to delineate the actual areas that are to be covered by the Voting Rights Act.

The NAACP is still working with us to help us get a strong Voting Rights Act so that people who have been disenfranchised, people who have been discriminated against will have the right to vote in this, the United States of America.

In 2015, the NAACP, after the death of Trayvon Martin, advocated for the arrest of his killer. The NAACP never said that he had to go to jail, but the belief was that, under the circumstances that existed at the time, the perpetrator should be prosecuted. There should, at least, be a trial. There should be an opportunity for the world to understand what happened to Trayvon Martin.

As a result, there was a trial. There was a finding. The NAACP was at the forefront, a part of the avant guard, if you will, to make sure that Trayvon Martin received justice. A trial is what ultimately occurred. I would daresay that, but for the NAACP and many other persons of goodwill, this would not have taken place.

Finally, I want to point out that the NAACP has also ventured into what is happening in Flint, Michigan. This is

some serious business that we have to take care of in Michigan. In Flint, Michigan, we have a circumstance wherein children, among others, but children have been poisoned. This was not at the hands of some major corporation that was doing something that was inappropriate. It was not at the hands of a civilian, some person who just decided he was going to do something ugly. It was not at the hands of some person associated with some sort of terrorist organization.

This was done by the government, at the hands of the government. Children have been poisoned at the hands of the government. That is an important point for us to digest because one does not expect that one would be poisoned by consuming the elixir of life, water, in this country. Especially, one would not assume this given that this country has some of the best technology and filtration systems in the world. In fact, there are none better than ours.

One would not expect that in a city wherein the water was fine before the hand of the government was imposed upon citizens, such that they couldn't make the choice themselves as to how they were going to regulate their water. A special person was put in charge at the hands of the State government, the Governor having the authority to appoint a person who literally took control of the city and, in so doing, caused great harm to befall young people, children, if you will.

When this happens, we have a duty, a responsibility, and an obligation to take immediate action to not only bring people to justice who would do this, but also to impose a just system such that persons who had been harmed can be made whole to the extent that people can be made whole. I say this because, truth be told, you cannot make these persons completely whole. All of the intelligence that we are receiving indicates that once you receive lead poisoning, you don't recover totally and completely. There will be some residue, and this can go on for years and years and years.

So the NAACP went there immediately and made it clear that it expected action and had a 15-point plan. I will say more about the 15-point plan as time permits because I want to honor my colleague, the Honorable CHAKA FATTAH, if he is available at this time. Given that he is on his way, I will continue.

The 15-point plan has 15 priorities that are listed, and I will go through these priorities rather quickly. They are, one, the emergency financial manager law must be repealed. This is the law that I spoke of earlier that allowed for the Governor to impose upon the citizens of Flint, Michigan, this emergency financial manager.

Much of this was done unfortunately under the auspices of saving money—some persons have said that we are talking about \$100 a day—saving some small amount of money so that some person who holds public office could

stand before the public and say: I saved you money. I saved you money. Look at what I have done.

Well, look at what you have done: You have changed the lives of innocent people forever in an effort to save a little bit of money and hold yourself out as a person who is cutting the budget, who is saving money for the taxpayers.

There are times when tax dollars are used effectively and efficaciously, and what they were doing with the water prior to this cut was a pretty good example of how things that are doing well can be corrected such that harm is placed upon people. I regret that it happened, but I am proud however that the NAACP is there to help us with this process of making people whole.

The second part of the plan would require water distribution that is currently being done by the National Guard to be done by local people. The National Guard does a good job, and I salute the National Guard for what they are doing. The truth is that local people need work, and this would provide them the opportunity to work and to be a part of the water distribution process. There is all of the good sense in the world in working out a system so that we can pay people who need work to help themselves by distributing water in their communities.

The third point is access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other food items. Because to a certain extent, this is a food desert area in some parts of Flint, Michigan. As a result, there is a desire to make sure that all persons can have access to fresh fruits and fresh vegetables—good, clean, wholesome food.

Number four, all Flint citizens must be provided free home inspections. There are many homes that have not been properly inspected. The water source that leads into the home has to be inspected, the lines, and this should be done at no cost to all citizens. The NAACP stands for this. My belief is that this will happen, but I am proud that the NAACP voiced a concern that it should happen.

I mentioned the Honorable CHAKA FATTAH from Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH) with the notion that I will reclaim time that he may not utilize.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the Lone Star State. He is a good friend, and I know that we have had an occasion to work together on water systems in Texas in my role as a member of the Appropriations Committee. We were able to work successfully on aiding communities that needed access to clean, safe water.

We had a hearing yesterday on the Hill on Flint in which we heard from the mayor and a host of other people. It is a circumstance in which, I think, we should have the utmost urgency and that the Army Corps should move aggressively. I would even hope that the President would take action, if nec-

essary, to nationalize the Guard to make sure that people in Flint get water.

I am rising today in honor of the birth of the NAACP. This is the most loved, most hated, the largest, the oldest, the boldest civil rights organization ever created. It has been at the forefront of efforts to have our Nation become the more perfect Union that the Founders had envisioned.

At every point, it has agitated, both in the streets and in the suites, to make changes. Here on the Hill, there is not an organization that has more consistently let their voice be heard on a whole range of issues. So I rise to thank those who have been a part thereof and who will continue to be.

The local NAACP in Philadelphia had an antiviolenace march all the way across a major thoroughfare in our city, 52nd Street. It was great to see an organization that obviously has a lot of sophistication, but it also has the touch at the neighborhood level to reach out to people and to have people understand that individual responsibility to make communities safer is as important as public policy initiatives that might be generated in halls of the legislature like here.

So I want to thank the NAACP for all it has done. We hosted the National Convention in Philadelphia. I had a chance to open up the convention and to fly in with the President when he came to address our criminal justice reform.

We have so much to do in our country. And we have the understanding that in order to do complicated work, we need organizations to do it. It is difficult for individuals themselves to achieve a lot, but when working together, we can achieve almost anything.

We are in a range of dates here of import. Just the other day, we acknowledged the announcement date in which President Barack Obama announced he was going to run for President. Yesterday was the day that Nelson Mandela walked free from a prison cell in Robben Island for over two decades.

So February 12th is when people of different ethnic backgrounds, different racial backgrounds got together—people like Ida B. Wells and W.E.B. DuBois got together and said that there was going to be an effort to put together a membership-based organization, rooted in neighborhoods, rooted in individuals who would come together in their local communities and who would fight on a variety of levels—on the policy level, in the courts, and also work in neighborhoods at a neighborhood level to improve the lives of people of our country, particularly people who had been disproportionately ill-served by government institutions and people of color in our country who had to work for years, in fact, centuries without a paycheck and who were prohibited by law to do basic things like marry, or own a home, or own land, who had to bear the brunt of a criminal justice

system that, even to this day, is yet to be perfected.

So we have a history, but it is made better because of the NAACP. So I wanted to come and thank my colleague for holding this Special Order here on the House floor. I don't usually speak in Special Orders. I think, over my 20 years, it is a very unusual thing, but I came today because the NAACP has laid the foundation under which so much of the progress we have made as a country has been made possible.

I look forward to an opportunity to continue to work with him on issues of importance to his State, to our country, and to this world.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the gentleman especially for taking to the floor tonight and sharing his views on the NAACP. I also especially thank him for the good work that he has done in the Congress of the United States of America. He has served his constituents well, and he should be saluted.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that if we did not have the NAACP, we would have to create it. That is just how vital it is to the American system of justice. It is not an official arm of the American system of justice, but it is an aid to justice in this country such that people expect the NAACP to be there under certain circumstances and in certain places.

This gets us back to Flint. People expected the NAACP to be there, and the NAACP was there. As I continue, Mr. Speaker, permit me to ask how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in consuming this time, let me continue to point out some of the things that the NAACP has within its 15-point priority plan.

□ 1900

Number five is that all Flint residents must be provided federally funded replacements for their damaged systems and appliances. What they are saying and what the NAACP is saying is simply this: There are some appliances that have been so damaged that they cannot continue to use these appliances. As a result, they have to be replaced. These are people not of great means, and any help that they can get to maintain a good quality of life should be afforded them.

The NAACP has indicated that fairness and justice must be examined in rate hikes and in continued billing for poisonous water.

I heard Mr. CUMMINGS make this point at a hearing. He made the point that people are still paying water bills for water that they can't drink. That was at the hearing. I am not sure what the situation is now. My understanding is that persons are still getting water in bottles, but are they still paying their water bills?

The NAACP believes that fairness and justice must be examined in terms of the rate hikes that have taken place

